3.5.1 ACE Fire Protection District

The ACE FPD, which includes the communities of Almo, Connor and Elba, is west of the Raft River Fire Protection District and south of Elba, east of Junction Valley/Mouton road and north of the Idaho/Utah state line. Elba-Connor receives fire protection from both ACE and Raft River FPDs. The District responds to an average of 16 brush fires within and near the city limits of each community annually (R&S Enterprise 2002), and since 1975 has been involved with 12 interagency wildfires for a total of 21,000 acres burned. This is the only prescription district in Cassia County and is funded by annual assessments collected from those landowners desiring fire protection. Most of the private lands are used for both grazing and hay production, while the Federal lands are used as summer grazing.

The bottomlands are in a combination of grass and shrub while the slopes are covered with juniper and understory varying from bare soil to heavy grass and shrub combinations (Figure 5). In other areas, frequent fires have removed the juniper and heavier shrub stands producing vast stands of grass and forbs (Figure 6).

R&S Enterprise prepared a Mitigation Assessment for ACE FPD in 2002. The Mitigation Assessment identified the Raft River and ACE Fire Department infrastructure including: personnel, training, equipment, and facility. In addition, the assessment included a hazardous fuels reduction program, estimated costs, and treatment location maps identifying the need to install buffer strips, brush/juniper clearing and reseeding with fire resistant vegetation over a total of 2,999 acres east of Elba and 934 acres northeast of Connor. The recommended program would reduce the potential for a catastrophic wildfire to these communities, would decrease fire department response time, and would reduce the wildfire potential throughout the area. Section 4.0 of this document includes specific mitigations and associated costs specified for the ACE FPD.

Figure 5. Homes in heavy juniper stands with little clearing around structures. South of Castle Rock at junction of Almo Road and Edwards Creek.

Figure 6. Sister Rock formation located within a recent juniper burn area.

Fire, Structural, and Community Assessments for ACE FPD

The following is a summary of the Fire Hazard Assessment for ACE-FPD. Table 7 shows the complete results. Overall, the single legal subdivision in this FPD received a Class B (medium) fire hazard assessment rating for 6 out of 6 elements (100%).

Vegetation Type – Sagebrush-grassland will be the primary carrier of any ignition to the juniper or to the wildland-urban interface.
Slope – Most slopes within the assessment area are 10-30%.
Aspect – The majority of the assessment area faces east.
Elevation – The elevation within the assessment area averages is between 3500-5500 feet.
Fuel Type – Fuel types within the assessment area is medium fuel (brush, medium shrubs, and small trees.
Fuel Density – Fuel density within the assessment area is broken moderate fuels adjacent to federal land 31 to 60% cover.
Fuel Bed Depth – Fuel bed depth with the assessment area is moderate (1-3 feet).

Table 7. Fire Hazard Assessment for ACE FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Vegetation Type	Rating Elements					
		Slope	Aspect	Elevation	Fuel Type	Fuel Density	Fuel Bed Depth
Durfee	Sagebrush/grass & juniper	B	B	B	B	B	B

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating
B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating
C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

The following is a summary of the Structural Hazard Assessment for ACE FPD. Table 8 shows the complete results. Overall, the subdivision received a Class B (medium) for 3 out of 7 elements (43%), and a Class C (high) for 4 out of 7 elements (57%).

Structure Density – The structure density within the assessment area is at least one structure per 5-10 acres.
Proximity to Fuels – Structures within the assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface are less than 40 feet to flammable fuels.
Building Materials – Less than 10% of the structures within the assessment area have fire resistant roofs and/or siding.
Survivable Space – Less than 10% of the structures within the assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface have improved survivable space around the property.
Roads – Roads within the assessment area are maintained, some with narrow two lane roads with no shoulders.

Response Time – Response time to the assessment area is 20-40 minutes or moderate.
Access – Access to assessment area is narrow, dead-end roads or 1 way in, 1 way out and with steep grades.

Table 8. Structural Hazard Assessment for ACE FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Rating Elements						
	Structure Density	Proximity of Fuels	Building Materials	Survivable Space	Roads	Response Time	Access
Durfee	B	C	C	C	B	B	C

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating
B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating
C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

Table 9 summarizes the Community Assessment for ACE FPD.

Table 9. Community Assessment for ACE FPD

Rating Element	Class A	Class B	Class C	Rating (A, B, or C)
Community Description	There is a clear line where residential business, and public structures meet wildland fuels. Wildland fuels do not generally continue into the developed area.	There is no clear line of demarcation; wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area.	The community generally exists where homes, ranches, and other structures are scattered but adjacent to wildland vegetation.	B
Response Time	Prompt response time to interface areas (20 min or less).	Moderate response time to interface area (20-40 minutes).	Lengthy response time to interface area (40+ minutes).	B
Firefighting Capability	Adequate structural fire department. Sufficient personnel, equipment, and wildland firefighting capability and experience.	Inadequate fire department. Limited personnel, and or equipment but with some wildland firefighting experience and training.	Fire department non-existent or untrained and/or equipped to fight wildland fire.	B
Water Supply	Adequate supply of fire hydrants and pressure, and/or open water sources (pools, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, etc.).	Inadequate supply of fire hydrants, or limited pressure. Limited water supply.	No pressure water system available near interface. No surface water available.	C

Local Emergency Operations Group (EOG)	Active EOG. Evacuation plan in place.	Limited participation in EOG. Have some form of evacuation process.	No EOG. No evacuation plan in place.	C
Structure Density	At least one structure per 0-5 acres.	On structure per 5-10 acres.	Less than one structure per 10 acres.	B
Community Planning Practices	County/local laws and zoning ordinances require use of fire safe residential design and adequate ingress/egress of fire suppression resources. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Local officials have an understanding of appropriate community planning practices for wildfire loss mitigation. Fire department has limited input to fire safe development and planning efforts.	Community standards for fire safe development and protection are marginal or non-existent. Little or no effort has been made in assessing and applying measures to reduce wildfire impact.	B (Not complete)
Fire Mitigation Ordinances, Laws, or Regulations in Place	Have adopted local ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping, building and planning. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Have voluntary ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping and building practices. Fire Department practices in planning process.	No local codes, laws or ordinances requiring fire safe building landscaping or planning processes.	B
Fire Department Equipment	Good supply of structure and wildland fire apparatus and miscellaneous specialty equipment.	Smaller supply of fire apparatus in fairly good repair with some specialty equipment.	Minimum amount of fire apparatus, which is old and in need of repair. None or little specialty equipment.	B
Fire Department Training and Experience	Large, fully paid fire department with personnel that meet NFPA or NWCG training requirements, are experienced in wildland fire, and have adequate equipment.	Mixed fire department. Some paid and some volunteer personnel. Limited experience, training and equipment to fight wildland fire.	Small, all volunteer fire department. Limited training, experience and budget with regular turnover of personnel. Do not meet NFPA or NWCG standards.	C
Community Fire Safe Efforts and programs already in place	Organized and active groups (Fire Dept.) providing educational materials and programs for their community.	Limited interest and participation in educational programs. Fire Department does some prevention and public education.	No interest of participation in educational programs. No prevention/education efforts by fire department.	A
Community support and attitudes	Actively supports urban interface plans and actions.	Some participation in urban interface plans and actions.	Opposes urban interface plans and efforts.	A